

BLACK POWER AS A POLITICAL STRATEGY IN JAMAICA
Trevor Munroe

(An open lecture given at the University 5th February, 1969)

Definitions can neither be right nor wrong. A definition can either be more or less useful. We need to understand this initially because I have not come here to indulge in the kind of sterile terminological dispute as to what Black Power means exactly. People who can afford to do this, in fact, people who have to do this, are essentially persons who are sufficiently free from the daily business of oppression to see this as an important work. I have not come here to define anything for you at any great length for I think definitions can neither be right nor wrong and they are usually a waste of time.

A definition usually has a very close relationship to the person who is defining. In fact if one examines the definitions of Black Power given by different people, it is usually quite easy to read back from the definition to an analysis of the person making this statement. When Manley, Shearer and the President of the United States define Black Power as black dignity, black beauty, black co-operation, but not black violence, these people clearly have a vested interest in a certain view of black power though one cannot say that the definition is right or wrong, because no definition is either right or wrong. It can either be more or less useful.

Having made that point that I am not concerned here to answer questions or to go on at any great length about definitions of Black Power, I want to give you my understanding of the term in what I consider its most useful way; the criterion of usefulness being the definition of black power which has most relation to what black sufferers are doing. Black Power and with that understanding I mean the ability of black sufferers to control their environment in the interests of their own humanization. I want this to be quite clear, because a lot of things follow from it, which I will proceed to indicate. One of the things which follows from the definition is that the whole notion of black power being racialism in reverse is nonsense. Because clearly racism implies domination of one racial group over another.

Black Power is concerned with the ability of black people to control their own environment in the interests of the fullest development of their human potential. Advocates of Black Power & practitioners of

Black Power are not concerned to dominate other groups, are not concerned to implement, to over-turn an existing power structure in order to replace it with one where black people are on top and white below. So that the understanding of Black Power that I wish to suggest to you, is most useful, has nothing to do with racism in reverse, rather with black people humanizing themselves through control of their own environment.

The second point I want to make which follows from the definition of Black Power, or the understanding of Black Power that I tried to give you is that it does not exist anywhere. Nowhere in the world today do black people control their own environment for whatever reason; needless to say in the interests of their humanization. Nowhere is this the case. However, what is becoming increasingly of political significance is the psychological demand of the oppressed to control their own environment in their own self-interest. So that Black Power does not exist anywhere, what is becoming increasingly significant is the demand for Black Power. The demand by black people that the time has come for them to control their own environment for their own self-development.

The third thing which follows from the understanding of Black Power is the notion of environment. This is a very broad term and is consciously broad. It includes the most general term referring to human beings in the same place, that is society. It includes the political order, the way in which decisions seem to be taken by the society and which are binding on the people in a particular territory, and it includes all aspects, all areas of activity which have some relationship to people living in society. So that when one talks about control of the environment, one means control of all those areas of human activity which have significance for the human condition.

Of equal importance, however, is an understanding that the different spheres of human activity, the different areas of the environment, which I have tried to list quickly, are not all of equal significance. This is crucial, because if one were to list things like culture, society, economy, technology and so on, it is clear under the most cursory analysis that the economy is of crucial significance to the way in which people live in society, in fact to the social character of any particular territory or collectivity of people. In this it is crucial that the way in which a society produces goods, the way in

which it goes about meeting the basic needs of its members, distributing goods and services is the way in which the society forms its social character, forms its social personality.

ECONOMY: THE KEY

It follows from this that when one talks about control of environment, when one means by environment several different layers of activity, if these layers of activity can be organized or seen hierarchically with the economy as the basis of the complex of factors which determine the way in which a person lives, then clearly one has to think of Black Power in terms of control of the basis of the environment which is the economy.

One needs to get this notion quite clearly, because I think it is important to break it down to the most individual level. The way in which a person lives is related primarily and most directly to the way in which they are employed, the money they earn, which in turn determines the education they are able to give their children or not able to give their children, and generally, the condition in which they are able to live in society. So I am arguing that in this environment which I have said it is the aim of Black Power to dominate the economy, the means of production, the way in which the goods are produced in the society determines the individual environment and therefore the collective character of the total social order. And it is important for us to understand the basic significance of the economy in the total complex of factors which make up their environment which Black Power is determined to set about to control.

AUTHORITY-past and present

It is important for a number of reasons:-

1) In a society such as ours it is clear on the most cursory analysis that men who have office in the society, people who are required to make laws for the society are all black. The Prime Minister is black, the main members of the political parties are black. The various public leaders in the political order or in the Governmental system are all black.

I am arguing that in this context one needs to make a crucial distinction between black authority and black power. And I want to develop this at length because there is a lot of confused analysis which can result from the inter-penetration or the failure to make this distinction.

We have an environment, within that environment certain factors are of overwhelming significance in the way in which the environment is organised and the character of that environment. In the particular kind of society which we have always known in the West Indies, where the means of producing goods and services for the society as a whole are controlled by a few people, most of whom are not resident in the society, the political order and those who inhabit office become not so much controllers as controlled. And the history of our society establishes this beyond any doubt. One need not be a Marxist in order to look back into the history of plantation society to see the extent to which it has been the planters who either own the lands of our country or who represent those who own, and the merchants who are responsible for the distribution of goods and services within the society who have exercised the power, who have exercised the ability to control people's lives within a given environment. This has been the case whatever the constitutional order.

GOVERNMENTAL ORDER

Again, to refer back, those of you who are historians, to the old representative system where there was a union between those who have economic power and those who exercise governmental authority. But the case for the distinction between governmental authority and economic or social power is made even more explicitly for us if one examines after 1865, where there was an explicit separation between those who held office and those who held social or economic power. And in the separation, the persons who dominated the policies of government, the persons who had to be taken into account in order for Government to decide what was to be done for the society as a whole were precisely the persons who held social and economic power, precisely the elements in the society who lie outside of the visible official authority structure. So I want to make this point quite explicit that in the West Indies—not talking about other societies for the time being—in Jamaica in particular, the governmental order, the people who hold office have never been the most significant elements in determining the way in which the social environment is organised, the methods and means whereby goods and services are produced for the satisfaction of popular needs.

I want to make this point concretely in a converse way.

THE TACTICS OF BLACK AUTHORITY

Today, the men who inhabit office—those who are now in and those who now out—but both of the same species, are saying that we are sufficiently

close to Black Power in Jamaica, that the last step (and these are those of them who say that we don't have Black Power now), towards Black Power is sufficiently small for it to be in most cases—in their formulation—a non-violent one. They are particularly obsessed with the notion of violence, and I shall come to this later. But the argument one gets from the legitimate organs of the press, from the various political leaders is that in a context where the offices of the society are inhabited by black men, we are sufficiently close to a state of Black Power that all one needs is marginal changes, superficial changes for the full state of Black Power to be inaugurated.

Black Authority vs Black Power

Now if by Black Power we understand black people's ability to control their own environment in their own self-interest, in their own humanization, then the fact that the members of the authority structure—those who hold office—are black, says nothing about the capacity of black people to control this environment in their own humanization. I want to make this quite clear, the distinction between black authority and black power. The distinction between a situation where a Minister of Government is legally responsible for signing laws, for making bills of Parliament into laws of the land so that if you and I do not obey these laws we become subject to legal punishment; a distinction between that kind of person, and the factors which he has to take into account in making that decision. This distinction makes it meaningful for us to see the Minister as having authority; and those who control the factors he must take into account, as having power. And if you know anything about the modern history of Jamaica since '44, what one has had is the progressive retreat of the power holders into positions of control of the political parties which have become progressively black, and in fact seem to be moving from a black to a brown position. But one wants to understand this clearly that one needs to see the public officials not so much as puppeteers, but as puppets. And this in a very real sense has always been the condition of West Indian society, where the men in office are not the men in power, where the distinction between authority—public authority and private power is crucial, and where in that distinction it is private power which determines more clearly what gets done in the society, and therefore, in economic terms the collective environment of black sufferers. The first distinction I want to make is between Black Authority and Black Power.

THE PEOPLE CALL THE TUNE

However, despite the fact that the men who are now defining Black Power as Black Dignity, and explicitly excluding from that definition any notion of black violence, the fact that they have had to take notice of the consciousness of black sufferers of themselves, I would argue, is of some extreme significance. Because in 1938 what one saw was black people taking to the streets in a mass. They occupied the country in a way that they had not done for several years previously. Since then, the slogans that one has had, and that one has **told** have been representative of popular consciousness have been slogans which have emerged more from above than below. If one considers for instance slogans like power and freedom which have figured in elections of days gone by, slogans which were supposed to have been representative of the popular sentiments of the mass of the people, one needs to draw a crucial distinction between that kind of slogan and the slogan Black Power which the politicians now need to take into account in their public reckoning. Because 30 years after 1938, for the first time, there is activity from below which has crystallised itself around the slogan Black Power, which activity the politicians are forced to take note of. They did not create the slogan, if you recall the way in which this became current in Jamaica, the way in which both the PNP and JLP have come to accept it superficially, one sees that this is a clear case of the politicians following the masses.

1938 and 1969

Now this is important because it recalls the historical analogy of 1938, where one had the masses taking to the streets, as I have said occupying the country in a way that they had not done for several years, and what happened? Because of a number of factors which one (for want of more complete analysis which would take a considerable length of time) can summarise as lack of experience primarily, the masses were converted from potentially revolutionary activity into reformist kinds of activity which have benefit primarily for those sections of the society which did not participate in the rebellion. I am saying that on the analogous occasion to today, one had the politicians first taking notice of the activities of the masses, and then subsequently taking advantage of it, and it is crucial for us to recall this historical analogy at this present point in time.

Because already the politicians have been forced to take notice of the upsurge of mass-consciousness, and we are now in the process of seeing them take advantage of it. We are now in the process of seeing them emptying the slogan of its potentially revolutionary content, of black people overturning a society, taking control of it in a way that they have never done before, and saying that we are sufficiently close to Nirvana, we are sufficiently close to Utopia for it not to require much more exertion. Leave it to us leaders. Now this is crucial because many of the unwary black brothers are likely to be taken in by this kind of analysis and therefore pre-empted from revolutionary activity into merely making an oppressive power structure less obviously so by increasing the blackness of its rhetoric. We must understand this because if you read Manley's statement in December last year where he clearly pre-empts, emptied the revolutionary concept of Black Power, and limits it to talk about black dignity, black beauty and so on, you see a straight line from December to two weeks ago when in London Shearer made roughly the same kind of speech. So that the tactics from here on is to empty the thing of its revolutionary content while maintaining the slogan, buying off the less wary of the brothers and shooting down the rest. We have got to be clear on this, that this shooting down is either going to be in explicit physical terms or more subtly in terms of excluding people who refuse to see that Black Power, as defined by the politicians, is the Black Power which has significance for black sufferers. We must understand that.

However, I think that there is another kind of danger, another sort of confusion which we ought to avoid, and that is the confusion between what I call Black Culturalism for want of a better term and Black Power.

BLACK CULTURALISM

If the statements of the politicians so far are trying to press on us a confusion between authority and power, a confusion between the presence of black officials and the occupation of black sufferers of their environment in a way which benefits themselves, then because of the extremeness of the psychological oppression of this kind of society one is getting an equally antithetical reaction, and this reaction finds its expression what I call Black Culturalism. This means quite simply that people who have become in recent times

conscious of the extent to which the society through violent means has whitened them, are now beginning through equally extreme measures to re-Africanize themselves, to discover a culture from which they were torn violently. Now this necessary, I would argue; it is good, I would also argue; but it has several dangers. The men who grow their hair long, who don't cut it, the women who cut down their hair, the men who wear dashikis and don't talk to anybody else except those who do the same are behaving in an entirely intelligible way. It is understandable. They are reacting to the totality of psychological oppression by negating it, by denying it in their own personal modes of behaviour. But the danger in this kind of activity is that it confuses personal emancipation with collective liberation. We must understand this because the danger in personal, culturalist activity is that it divides black sufferers on the basis of their ability to adopt the superficialities in very many cases of a contrary way of proceeding than that to which the society has inculcated us. The danger is clear, because if the business of oppression is collective, if it does not discriminate as between black people who are in a dominated position in the economy and society, then equally the business of liberation (if it must succeed) has not, cannot rely on being a personal act alone, but has to make itself collective in the same way that the business of oppression is. So that it is important, I would argue, even necessary for men to re-capture a past which has been torn violently from them, for them to stand outside of the society and acquire a concept of themselves which has nothing to do, or rather which necessarily denies the existing society in order for them to commit themselves personally to its total overthrow.

I think it is necessary psychological break. You need to make the break in personal way in order to get to the stage where you channel that personal, psychological break into a collective social overturning.

I think it is necessary; but should we confuse ourselves as to its sufficiency, we get into a position where we are playing into the hands of the existing power structure by dividing our forces, by seeing allies only in terms of the superficialities of dress and so on, and therefore, in so doing consigning to a position of enemy many brothers who are of great potential usefulness.

BLACK SUFFERERS

From this, I think one moves into the notion of Black Power itself as the activity or the ability of black sufferers to liberate themselves,

to control their own environment in the interests of their own humanization. This is distinct from black authority. It is distinct from black culturalism. Both black authority and black culturalism may be necessary pre-conditions for the attainment of black power, but, I would argue are insufficient. So one needs to move from the necessary to the sufficient condition for liberation. Now let us examine the term black sufferers, because it is clear that in Jamaica and in the West Indies more generally, most people who are black, suffer, and most of those who suffer are black. We have got to understand it. Most people who are black suffer, and most of those who suffer are black. But there are persons who are not black who suffer, and there are sufferers who are not black. It is necessary for us to appreciate the extent to which there are some black people who are not sufferers. And this leaves us to consider two types of person whom I think it is necessary to consider, in order for us to arrive at any understanding of a strategy of black power—a political strategy of black power.

THE HOUSE SLAVE AND THE WHITE SYMPATHISER

The first person is the black person who is not a sufferer, in fact the black person who is an ally of the oppressor and one likes to see him in terms of his historical origin. He is the house-slave. We must be clear about this. Equally one must see the persons who suffer, or the persons who identify themselves with the wretched, most of whom are black, this person for want of a better term we can call the white revolutionary. So I want to deal with both the house slave and the white revolutionary.

Let's take the white revolutionary first. First a general point. One's allies as well as one's enemies in the business of black power are determined not by words, not even by dress, because there are a lot of police spies who don't cut their hair and who wear dashikis—but by action.

We need to understand that as the present contradiction between increasing oppression and the increasing need to liberate one's self from oppression develops, that from here on one's enemies and one's allies are judged through action. If a man says he supports Black Power you say O.K., but the next question has to be, "what have you done in the interests of Black Power" or secondly, "what do you intend to do if this awakening has only recently come to you?" So that we have to understand that our allies and our enemies are

determined through action and the specific relation of this criteria of determining our association to the position of the white revolutionary and the house slave.

Now when white people come to you and say, "I understand suffering in this society, and I want to identify myself with the struggle," you tell them that in order for them to establish their collective presence or their individual presence within the collective movement THEY MUST KEEP OUT. It is a contradiction, but it is true, that the business of white revolutionaries is to gain access to places, people and information which precisely because of black powerlessness we can't do. To make this even more concrete, the white revolutionary, the white advocate of black power must understand that his business is not to hang around black people as if they were exotic curios or to enter the jungle to do good work, his business if he is to contribute to the development and the success of the movement is to be our fifth columnist in the cocktail party circuit.⁽¹⁾ It is as simple as that. And if you have nothing to bring to the movement, if you hang around and hope that by hanging around your physical presence will establish your psychological commitment to the movement, then you will be burnt up like all the oppressors when the time comes; you will be burnt up. So we have got to be clear on this. But it is equally true to say that brothers must understand that the business of total liberation, the business of attaining black power involves people who are sufferers, but who are not necessarily black in skin colour.

Conversely, the business of attaining black power involves the annihilation of people who are black but who are not sufferers. And we have got to be clear on that, because the house slave in West Indian history has been one of the most insidious animals, one of the most successful saboteurs of all history, because in the collective experience of continual rebellion against the plantation order, in the business of burning the great houses, the house slave has always been the person who at the last moment has either given away the game and therefore increased the total suffering of the black people, those who were rebelling in this case, or has in some way or other contributed to the defeat of incipient liberation movements. So that the moment we determine that black people around us aren't committed to the business of attaining black power, we must be quite ruthless. They must be cut off psychologically, socially, and in cases where they threaten the physical success of the movement, physically.

(1) In the discussion which followed someone mentioned that the cardinal function of the white revolutionary was to make revolutionary

But precisely because our way of treating the house-slave has to be so extreme, we must be very clear on the criteria for determining who is the saboteur, and that criteria has little to do with dress or other such superficial attributes, but rather with action, and we must be clear on that.

VIOLENCE

On violence however, the business of historical liberation struggles in this part of the world --- were objectively quests for black power, if not subjectively so. The slaves who were rebelling may not have been conscious that what they were about was transforming the social order, taking it over in a way that black sufferers would control their own lives and so on (the slaves may not have been conscious of this) but objectively this is what they were about.

But that collective experience has a lot else to teach us besides the presence of the house-slave and the danger of this individual. Because when we look at our history, this is the first point I want to make in relation to the history of black struggle, we will see that our forefathers before us who slaved on the plantation were never mystified about violence.

The black sufferers who produced those who are suffering today were always clear that the method of oppression determines to a large extent the method of liberation. Violence on the plantation begot violence against the plantation. The people who were whipped in the gangs which produced sugar had no time to debate as to whether the violence is a legitimate or illegitimate activity. It was being used against them in a way which allowed them no option in order to remove it.

LEGAL VIOLENCE

Violence in this society has more often than not been legal violence disguised, therefore, as justice. Paul Bogle was hanged. Paul Bogle was hanged after what the people today call "due process of law". Marcus Garvey was incarcerated after passing through a Law Court of the land. Reynold Henry was hanged in the same way. I am merely making the point that we should not assume in Jamaica or in the West Indies that unjust violence is necessarily illegal. In fact, the collective experience of black people in this part of the world has been the experience of legal violence. And we need to be very clear on this. So that when Manley, Shearer, and the other so-called leaders (they are increasingly becoming

so-called leaders) when these people talk about Jamaica and the West Indies being law abiding societies, we must ask ourselves exactly what is their point, because this could not be further from the truth. And when they make these points they forget that the person to whom they ask us to pay homage as a national hero—Marcus Garvey—was never mystified about what needed to be done in order for an oppressed class to gain its freedom. Because there has been no oppressing class in history which has yielded its affluence voluntarily. Equally there has been no oppressed class which has liberated itself without struggle. And listen to Marcus Garvey for a moment because I think it is quite crucial. These men have been forced because of the need to catch up with black consciousness to make a man a national hero, yet at the same time condemn as subversive those people who are saying no more, no less than Garvey said. And I want you to listen to one sentence from Garvey relating to the question of how and what is usually required when people have to liberate themselves.

Garvey said, "any sane man, race or nation that desires freedom must first of all think in terms of blood." This is the national hero of Jamaica, not Trevor Munroe.

My brothers, I am merely making this point in order for us to understand that when black sufferers today are thinking about black liberation, they must not be mystified about notions of violence as against non-violence. I am saying that sociologically for those who want to distinguish between description and prescription, I am not prescribing anything. I am merely saying that sociologically the business of liberation is almost directly determined by the methods of oppression.

THE NEED FOR CONSCIOUSNESS AND ORGANIZATION

However we can learn more about the collective experience of struggle in the West Indian context, the collective experience for black power, from its partial failures as well as its partial successes. One is that before we reach to a stage where we can over-turn an existing order which oppresses the majority of black people who are the majority of the society, a widespread consciousness has to be disseminated—a consciousness of the totality of suffering, a consciousness of the reasons of suffering, and the alternative to the existing order. Now in the building of this general consciousness it is crucial that one has organs, organs like newspapers, call them broadsheets, if you will. But broadsheets, newspapers, one-page rags are at one and the same time

CHIONARY

Over 8,000 entries
Concise, easy-to-use format
Common-sense phonetic
Communications
Travelers, students,
Businesspeople
Totally modern and up-to-date

US \$13.95 (CAN \$17.50)
ISBN-13 978-0-7627-6275-8
ISBN-10 0-7627-6275-X

51395

8 762761 62758

symptoms of a wide-scale oppressive situation as well as means toward ending that situation in so far as these broadsheets contain the message of suffering to the brothers throughout the land, and if they are properly run, should also contain analyses of the way in which people have gotten into that position so that the people will know what to do when the time comes.

But consciousness is not enough. And this point again I think is crucial. Consciousness, my brothers and sisters, can burn buses. It cannot overturn the social order. Consciousness of blackness, consciousness of suffering, consciousness of why black people suffer in plantation orders is important. It is necessary. But like the possession of black authority, but like the awareness of self which produces black cultural -ism, consciousness is not enough, because repression is both conscious and organized. Liberation has to be both self-conscious of the reason for its oppression and organized for its own ends. And if you think that conditions in contemporary Jamaica are such as the oppressors aren't organized, then look again. Look to last September when the policemen went on strike, when, within hours the property owners in St. Andrew, in fact they were called the "leading members of the corporate area's gun clubs" were sworn in, given legal authority as arms of the state.

Look what happened in Montego Bay where the property owners, some of the biggest names in the history of Montego Bay as well as its present state, were forming themselves into vigilante committees, given legal authority in order to protect property which is confined to I don't know what infinitesimal percentage of the population. So all that I am saying here is that as repression is self-conscious, as it is organized, so too, consciousness among black sufferers is not sufficient. It is necessary, it is not sufficient for the business of attaining black power.

CONCLUSION

However, I think I will leave you there and we can reason together, that really Black Power is about the ability of black sufferers to control their own environment. In that environment, divided into several spheres and areas the economy is the crucial repository of power, especially in plantation society. Given this, the blackness of the authority structure is not the same thing as the blackness of the power structure. In fact it is its converse. Equally, we have to beware

of confusing personal cultural emancipation with the business of acquiring control of our environment. That personal therapy is necessary but not sufficient for collective liberation. And then we need to understand that in the strategy for the attainment of black power we must distinguish between several kinds of individuals, some of whom are black, but not sufferers i.e. the house-slave; some of whom are sufferers but not black, the white revolutionary. We must learn to deal with both of them. In addition we must look back to our history. We must see the collective continual attempts at liberation where those engaged were never mystified about violence. We must see that the very national hero of Jamaica today has been quite clear about the necessity for this in certain conditions and we must understand that consciousness is necessary. We must also understand the means for arriving at consciousness, and lastly we must begin to organize so that when the means of arriving at consciousness are suppressed, as they inevitably will be, that there is organization on which to fall back on.

And having recognized both the dangers in the present juncture that the politicians are likely to try to co-opt Black Power into the power structure or rather the authority structure and thereby make repression more efficient by making it more black, having understood these things then we must begin to organize for the political strategy of acquiring black power in this society, and at the same time recognize that because power resides in the economy, power does not reside here. So that liberation must begin here, but as we will soon realize, when liberation begins, it will not end in Jamaica. We must now reason brothers.

FOR DENNIS SLOLY

by MORTIMO PLANNO

My brother

Your courage must long be remembered

How young you were

How brave you were to

Take up such struggle

Life though so short

Yet your brothers are here

To take up from where

It seems you have left

To take an untimely rest

Those who are left behind

Let this be a sign

Never reverse out, NEVER!!!

Make our drive be forward even

"WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS"VAUGHAN CROSKILL.

The street began to overflow with people, some were dressed in streaming red gowns which fluttered restlessly in the wind and looked like flames rising from a sea of coal black faces. Oddly enough, the crowd made no noise, only the wind could be heard rustling through the leaves of the ackee trees which lined each side of the street.

I sat perched on top of a building with a flat roof covered with pebbles and tar, which had dried and hardened, imprisoning the smooth rounded stones for eternity. I had secured a good view of the street below me, and all at once a surge of pride ran through my body, they thought I wasn't going to do it, they said I didn't have the nerve, but they were wrong, I was here ready and waiting, waiting in case he would defy the reports and try to preach to the intellectual hooligans who were selfishly trying to destroy that which he and his family had fought so hard to build.

The sun was beginning to rise, and still there was no sign of the guest of honour, the sweat began to stick to my shirt and I envied my red gowned friends who stood silently under the shade of the ackee trees. They stood there under the lower branches and seemed to symbolize the rotten fruit which had fallen and rotted where it lay, no longer of value to the tree. I tried to push this thought out of my mind, I knew it was wrong and unhealthy for me to think such thoughts, and I

....knew

knew my red gowned friends would frown upon such thoughts and perhaps call me a traitor for thinking them, but still they would not go.

My brother had often told me of the things which our honoured guest was trying to beat into the heads of the people, his views on this matter were strong, almost violent. He and his friends had been trying hard to conquer the shining castles our honoured guest was building in the air for the benefit of the people; they had talked with people all over the country. He told me that on day they would succeed in showing the people the true way to the third world, but today was my day, today I was going to perform what all my red gowned friends knew was the only real solution to the problem. Today I would be declared a "National Hero".

This thought seemed to renew the strenght in my body, and the pain in my arched back seemed to subside with it. I picked up the shining black telescopic rifle with its wooden stock, and began to polish the muzzle with the sleeve of my shirt until the sun's rays which reflected on it began to hurt my eyes. Then it happened. The black Mercedes Benze, its engine purring, crawled slowly up the street. I could not see the face of the guest of honour, only his black hand was visible, the black hand with its gold ring, waved slowly and majestically at my red gowned friends, but no hand was raised in acknowledgement.

The car stopped in front of the wooden platform, I raised my rifle and positioned it comfortably in the hollow of my armpit. The door opened and he stepped out -

He was immaculately dressed in a black suit and white shirt, his head held high as he walked briskly towards the steps.

.....The

The hot salty sweat oozed from my brow and trickled down the side of my face and into the corners of my mouth, my stomach leapt and fell simultaneously, and my heart seemed to inflate and fill every corner of my chest, as he stood in front of the microphone. His head loomed defiantly within the cross of my sights, and his voice vibrating seemed to shake the buildings away from their very foundations.

"We will tolerate no nonsense
Me and my"

The shot rang out echoed by the microphone, his gold ringed hand covered the hole in his face which seemed to let the air rush out from his body as it crumpled and fell in the dust, I stood up and wiped the sweat from my brow, the faces of my red gowned friends all turned from the mass of bloody black, gold, and white and looked up towards me, I lifted my rifle above my head ready to receive their shouts of praise and gratitude, but all was silent, once more, they looked back at the broken body, turned and went back to their classes.

§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§

AFRICAN COLUMN

Rasta "Historian"

(A column written by a reader)

AFRICA DAY MAY 25th ESTABLISHED
BY THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN
UNITY. 1963

Move up or I and I will move over
you.

The road to our freedom will not
be easy because there are a lot of
white pigs in this country who are
going to help their backward yes-
-men ~~who say~~ they are leaders of
Black People.

I want to say any men who exploit
our people will never get away from
trial before the people.

HAILE SELASSIE 1

Black People! Black People! Stop!
Look! Listen! Any government that is
for the people must lift the stand-
-ard of living of the Black People
that we can be proud of our Black
Race. Africa is our father's land,
we must be proud! As long as the
strong oppress the weak, war and
discontent will ever mar the path
of man. We will have to fight, how
long are we going to live in slums?
This country is an African State,
the youth must know this, up till
now there are black people in
Jamaica who don't know that he or
she came here in slave ships. They
think they came here in a country
bus and not from Africa.

The march of Black Youth in Jamaica

and the world, Ethiopia leads. Many
African states suffer the same kind
of colonialism as Jamaica, the same
path they walk to their freedom, is
the same path we Africans in Jamaica
have to walk for our freedom. Remem-
-ber the African people in Jamaica,
and the western world, is not yet
free from white nationalism. Black
nationalism is our goal because we
have to go to Africa to live with
our brothers and sisters there.
Blacks remember, our King grant land
space for us in Ethiopia the world
know it.

All Black People give thanks for
the vision the Hon. Garvey showed
to us. Africa for the African those
at home and those abroad, he told us
people. A revolution is bloody, that
we Africans know, because there has
never been a bloodless revolution.
African brothers and sisters the
longer we take to learn African
History, the longer we will stay
in slavery. It is because of African
History why Dr Rodney is not with
us. He taught us that before the
coming of the white man Africans
were living in unity and dignity.
The first thing that was called
man was created in Africa-Give
Thanks! They ban Dr Rodney but they
can't ban Rasta from preaching
BLACK POWER. Let us look to Africa.

US \$13.95/CAN \$17.50
ISBN-13 978-0-7616-0278-8
ISBN-10 0-7616-0278-X

51395

8 780761 602788

Pat Lewis

Tripe twisted
 Belly cries,
 Swollen tongue
 Bitter eyes

I left my soul at home today;
 Like the others I could not bear
 to drag it on the road
 to see it explode
 beneath
 the white sun's
 abrasive heat.
 For though we set, in desolation
 Only in

Oblivion,
 Negation,
 Can we hope to assuage
 the drums of wrath
 that rumble in our bellies

Look at them

(My brothers and sisters)
 staring with insensitive fish eyes
 Wind swept ruins,
 Spiritless structures,
 With scaly skins,
 and festering ruptures,
 Made in God's image and likeness
 Temples of the Holy Ghost. Are they?

Around us loom the distant hills
 brown-burned in the sun's stark heat;
 with the brazen mockery of modern mansions,
 where women sit

filing nails,
 and combing hair,
 sipping tea,
 and look fair,

Where men bask by filtered pools
 reading in the "Economist" or the "Encounter"
 of Hollywood divorces
 or VietNam atrocities

Sometimes looking down here
 with romantic ideas of a dirty paradise
 where we chew and screw

hedonistic abandonment
 governing our lives

where drinking and dancing

fulfil our night

and a hateful laziness

the cause of our plight

All this said with little pity and less knowledge
 to satisfy their pure bourgeois conscience

Can anyone here make a Molotov Cocktail?

AFRICAN NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

(Blackman Newspaper, Kingston,
Jamaica -July 5, 1930)

The chance for national freedom in Africa must **not** be ignored any longer by Negroes. We in the West Indies, Africa and America must have one viewpoint in this direction. We must not listen to the foolish talk or advice of traitors of our own race or cowards, nor to calculating exploiters of other races who desire to keep us in subjugation as a people. We must like all other oppressed peoples, organize with determination and power, and nowhere can we demonstrate this better than in the Homeland, Africa.

African National Independence will mean so much to the black man everywhere; it will give him a new lease on life; it will enable him to hold up his head with greater pride. He has too long been humiliated and ignored not now to seek a chance and hold it when he gets it.

August 16, 1930

W.I. Sugar Industry

The W.I. planters have had their day in not only making money out of sugar and the by-products of cane, but they have swindled for centuries the black labourers who have

Ras Tafari encouraging him and helping him to develop a formidable state

contributed greatly to their wealth. For a long while, nearly 230 years, they had free labour in slavery. After emancipation they paid very little wages to those who had to labour in the cane fields. The great fortunes that were made were as easily dissipated as made and now that they and their heirs are feeling the reaction, they think that our local government and the Imperial Government should come to their rescue.

October 25, 1930

Ethiopia

We have great hopes of Abyssinia in the East-the country that has kept her tradition even back to the days of Solomon. Some of our peculiar sociologists when they discover the intelligence of the Abyssinians try to make out that they are not Negroes, but everybody of ordinary, ethnological intelligence knows that the Abyssinians are black people. They are a part of the great African Race, that is to rise from its handicaps, environments and difficulties to repossess the Imperial authority that is promised by God Himself in the inspiration of Princes coming out of Egypt and Ethiopia stretching forth her hands. Verily Ethiopia is stretching forth her hands and we must all look to

SLAVES IN THE HOUSE OF BABYLON
(An excerpt from a long short story by a young W.I. writer)

On the night before the day when he was jailed, the youth rose up to speak at a gathering of the peoples. He had nothing to lose; they would be taking him tomorrow in any case. He felt a burning need to make some statement to the people, well aware that these might be his last recorded words. He raised his hand for silence and he said:

"We look around and we see that the ones in authority, at least the ones visibly so, are black in colour of skin. And we realize then and there that when the time comes a man cannot be saved because of the colour of his skin. For we must learn to recognize the colour of his heart and mind. And it doesn't take long to do. If a man is conscious, he can recognize the good or evil in the other man. There need be no formal definition. We have been forced to be suspicious of people with colours like ours; there has been a long history of this suspicion. In the future especially, and now in the present, when we must tread softly because of the forces of repression ranged and ready against us, this suspicion and ability to recognize will serve us in good stead.

The separation will be a painful process. But when the judgement is falling there will be no time for compassion or mercy; if so, we damn ourselves. Some Black men will fall along with their white idols and masters. It would be easier if the oppressor if the oppressors were obviously, clearly defined in terms of colour. It would be easier if the army and police force were comprised only of white men. Then the sword could be wielded without compunction or hesitation. But while the main force of police and army are obviously repressive, there must be one or two who are conscious of their ambiguous position. We say to them now, make sure they are on the right side, for their time is running out. When the slaves of the field reach the house of Babylon, let there be no one but oppressors there. Let the house slaves beware; let

" the conscientious judge themselves. Let the conscientious turn from the evil pleasure of Egypt, like Moses, and join their enslaved people in this time of testing. For the change is coming and now is. Beyond the mountain of oppression lies the Promised Land.

We know where to look for the ones with the house-slave mentality. We know the areas where only few will be saved; where the majority defend the white man and his actions. And when we strike it will be final. The slaves in the house of Babylon will fall even harder than their masters. For we know that the white man inherently is evil, especially to the black race; but what excuse have those blacks who are evil towards people of their own skin, those blacks who accept with love the kicks and hate of their white owners? Those who will try to save the burning house of Babylon? They have no excuse for their actions; and they deserve no mercy in our dealing with them."

UNITY ... OUR ONLY HOPE FOR
SURVIVAL

(statement from a group of youths in Eastern Kingston)

THE STRUGGLE OF OUR FORE FATHERS FROM THE TIME OF SLAVERY HAS INTENSIFIED WITH THIS GENERATION. WE THE YOUTH OF TODAY FULLY KNOW THAT OUR PEOPLE FROM THE START WERE PEOPLE WHO WERE ALWAYS ON THE MOVE FOR FREEDOM. SO WHY IS IT THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE YOUTH WHO KNOW THESE GREAT THINGS ABOUT OUR PAST ARE STILL BEING FOOLED BY THE DIRTY CORRUPTED POLITICIANS, AND ARE STILL WAGING WARFARE AMONG THEMSELVES? IN THE YEARS 1965 - 67 THE CORRUPTED POLITICIANS USED YOU, AS THEY ARE STILL USING YOU TO DESTROY OPPRESSED PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELVES.

THE POLITICIANS GAVE OUT GUNS TO THE YOUTHS, THE YOUTH DEFENDED THE DOGS WITH THEIR LIVES, THE RESULT WAS DEATH, IMPRISONMENT AND A LOT OF SUFFERING. WHO GAINED FROM ALL THESE CORRUPTED DEEDS? THE DIRTY CROW-BAIT POLITICIANS. THIS IS THE TIME FOR YOUTHS IN ALL AREAS TO KICK OUT THE (CANIBALISTIC POLITICIANS).

FROM 1966 THEY SEEMED TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THE SLUMS AND IN 1969 THEY ARE COMING OUT OF THEIR MANSIONS AND CASTLES TO TRY ONCE MORE TO FOOL THE YOUTHS, TO GET THEM TO DEFEND THEM IN THEIR CORRUPTED DEEDS AGAIN. HOW MANY YOUTHS WILL BE FOOLED AGAIN? HOW MANY YOUTHS WILL KILL OTHERS FOR THE CROWS? YOUTHS SHOULD REMEMBER ALL THE BLACK YOUTHS ALL OVER JAMAICA DOING 30 TO 100 YEARS FOR THE POLITICIANS AND REMEMBER MOST OF ALL THOSE WHO DIED PERFORMING THE DEEDS OF THEIR BOSSES WHO HAVE NOT GOT ONE DAY IN PRISON BECAUSE IF THERE WAS JUSTICE THEY WOULD BE THE ONES SENT TO PRISON,

THE REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH OF THIS COUNTRY AND ALL PROGRESSING PEOPLE HOLD THEM RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERY ONE THAT IS SUFFERING BECAUSE OF THEM. YOUTHS SHOULD REMEMBER OUR HOPE LIES IN THE STRENGTHENING OF UNITY AMONG THE BLACK YOUTH AND THE SUFFERING MASSES OF THE SLUMS. WITHOUT UNITY THE YOUTH AND THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF JAMAICA WILL BE RETURNED TO CHAINS VERY SOON. YOUTHS OF THE SLUM HAVE A GREAT PART TO PLAY IN THEIR HANDS LIE THE TASK OF STOPPING TRIBAL WARFARE, SETTLING QUARRELS AND SEEING TO IT THAT THE POLITICIANS ARE KICKED OUT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS. THEY ALSO HAVE THE MAJOR TASK OF TEACHING THE YOUTHS AND OTHER PEOPLE THAT WILL LISTEN THE GREATNESS OF OUR HOMELAND, AFRICA. BLACK POWER IS THE CONCEPT TO FREE US FROM POVERTY, WITHOUT BLACK POWER, BLACK SUFFERERS WILL NEVER RISE FROM THEIR LOWLY STATE. SUFFERERS TEACH YOUR CHILDREN THE DIGNITY OF BLACK AND IN TEACHING THEM YOU YOURSELF WILL ALSO GAIN MORE PRIDE IN BEING BLACK. GIVE YOUR CHILDREN BLACK TOYS, BLACK FOR BLACK PEOPLE. SLUM DWELLERS, YES, YOU, WAIT YOU NEVER KNEW THAT YOU WAS A SLUM DWELLER? DO YOU THINK THE POLITICIANS WHO YOU SHOT YOUR BROTHER FOR WOULD LIVE IN THE DIRTY HOUSES THAT YOU LIVE IN? WHY DID YOU GIVE YOUR FREEDOM FOR HIM? TO GIVE YOUR FREEDOM GIVE IT FOR THE LIBERATION OF YOUR PEOPLE, THE SLUM DWELLERS. GIVE IT FOR YOUR YOUTH FOR BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS FOR THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE OUR FUTURE. UNITY, YES, UNITY IS OUR ONLY HOPE. BLACK YOUTH MUST UNITE THEMSELVES, YOUTH MUST CONTROL THE SLUM FULLY LIKE OUR BLACK BROTHERS IN AMERICA. IN THE SLUMS OF AMERICA THE BLACK PANTHER AND OTHER BROTHERS CONTROL THE SLUMS FULLY. WHY CAN'T WE BE LIKE THEM? LET US TRY AND KEEP SLUM AFFAIRS AMONG OURSELVES, LET US PLAN OUR OWN FUTURE. THE POLICE (BOY) CAN'T GIVE US JUSTICE. WHY CALL HIM? WE MUST SETTLE OUR OWN AFFAIRS NOT IN THE WAY THE POLICE DOES BUT BY SHOWING OUR PEOPLE THE

.....RIGHTS

RIGHTS. IF WE CAN CONTROL OUR AREA, THEN WE WILL BE ABLE TO RID OURSELVES OF POLICE BRUTALITY BECAUSE THEY WILL BE AFRAID TO ENTER AN AREA WHERE THERE IS NO INFORMER OR WHERE THE PEOPLE NEVER AID POLITICIANS.

BLACK UNITY AMONG SUFFERING BLACK PEOPLE IS OUR HOPE. THE J.L.P. - P.N.P. CAN'T HELP US OUR PARENTS SUFFERED UNDER THE COLONISTS THEN UNDER THE BUSTA-MANLEY CLIQUE. THE YOUTH OF TODAY WILL NOT SUFFER UNDER THE GENERATION OF THAT FAMILY DOWN WITH SHEAROUT-MANLEY. BLACK YOUTHS UNITE, CONTROL YOUR AREA LIKE OUR BROTHERS THE BLACK PANTHERS. BLACK IS ONE FOR IF BLACK PEOPLE ARE FREE ALL PEOPLE WILL BE FREE.
(BLACK POWER NOW)

AS THE WORD OF THAT AFRICAN OUR GREAT PROPHET- THE HONORABLE MARCUS GARVEY- GOES:-

"WE AFRICANS AWAKEN

THE MORNING IS AT HAND

NO MORE ART THOU FORSAKEN

OUR BOUNTEOUS MOTHERLAND

FROM FAR THY SONS AND DAUGHTERS

ARE HASTENING BACK TO THEE

THEIR CRY RING OVER THE WATERS

THAT AFRICANS SHALL BE FREE."

@@@@@@@@

BONGOMAN

.....	
BLACK POWER AS A POLITICAL	
STRATEGY IN JAMAICA.....	Trevor Munroe
POEM.....	Mortimo Planno
WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY	
FRIENDS.....	Vaughan Crosskill
AFRICAN COLUMN.....	Historian
POEM.....	Pat Lewis
Blackman Newspaper.....	Marcus Garvey
Slaves in the House of Babylon...	
Unity Our Only Hope for Survival.	
.....	

BONGO - MAN

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN YOUTH
JUNE 1969.

#3

RECEIVED
DEC 4 1980
UNIV. WIS. LIBRARY



6d